

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4661

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 4011

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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SHUM ET
SUBJECT: DRAFT HUMAN RIGHTS PLAN FOR ETHIOPIA

REF: A. STATE 139160 B. STATE 142617

1. EMBASSY FINDS THAT DRAFT COUNTRY PLAN STRIKES RIGHT KIND OF BALANCE IN CONSIDERING HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA THAT IS ESSENTIAL FOR UNDERSTANDING OF COUNTRY WHOSE REVOLUTION IS INCOMPLETE, WHOSE GOVERNMENT IS STRIVING TO EXERT ITS AUTHORITY IN FACE OF VIOLENT OPPOSITION AND ALMOST DAILY ASSASSINATION OF OFFICIALS OR OTHER PRO-GOVERNMENT FIGURES, AND FOR WHOM REPRISAL OFTEN APPEARS TO BE ONLY EFFECTIVE DEFENSE OF ITS RIGHT TO EXIST. THRUST OF PLAN SEEMS TO US TO MEET CRITERIA ESTABLISHED IN SECRETARY VANCE'S ATLANTA SPEECH, AND WE HAVE NO BASIC PROBLEMS WITH WHERE COUNTRY PLAN COMES OUT, NOR FOR THAT MATTER WITH HOW IT GOT THERE. EMBASSY'S COMMENTS ARE ACCORDINGLY EITHER MORE OF EDITORIAL NATURE OR REFLECTION OF SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES AND ARE INDICATED BELOW AS ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO REFTEL B TEXT, WITH EXPLANATORY COMMENTS AS CONSIDERED NECESSARY.

2. ONE COMMENT OF TACTICAL NATURE SEEMS IN ORDER. AS COUNTRY PLAN INDICATES, US HAS SPOKEN OUT WITH REGARD TO
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HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN ETHIOPIA ON TWO MAJOR OCCASIONS TO DATE. SHARP REACTION HERE HAS SHOWN THAT MESSAGE HIT HOME AND THAT ETHIOPIANS ARE NOW ACUTELY AWARE THAT WE ARE WATCHING THEM ON THIS SOCRE. HENCE, WHILE EMBASSY CONCURS WITH POSSIBLE ACTION D. THAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT FORCEFULLY ON MAJOR INCIDENTS OF VIOLATION IN ETHIOPIA, EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT HENCEFORTH A BROADSIDE

ATTACK ON PROBLEM IS NO LONGER EITHER REQUIRED OR PRO-
DUCTIVE. AS PLAN SUGGESTS, WE CAN ADOPT MORE SELECTIVE
APPROACH WITH FULL BALANCE BEING PROVIDED TO ACKNOWLEDGE
OTHER SIDE OF ETHIOPIA'S HUMAN RIGHTS COIN. IT WOULD ALSO
BE OF GREAT HELP IF WE DID NOT HAVE TO WAGE LONELY
CAMPAIGN, THAT IS, IF WE COULD RECEIVE OCCASIONAL PUBLIC
SUPPORT FOR OUR APPROACH FROM OTHER FRIENDLY COUNTRIES.
AT MOMENT, ONLY OTHER GOVERNMENT OF WHICH WE AWARE THAT
HITS EPMG ON HUMAN RIGHTS IS SWEDEN, AND ITS EFFORTS ARE
USUALLY PRIVATE, RATHER THAN PUBLIC, BUT QUITE EFFECTIVE
IN GAINING ETHIOPIANS' ATTENTION.

A. HUMAN RIGHTS CONDITIONS

RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS IN ETHIOPIA, (DELTE
"IMPERFECTLY", ADD "NOT WELL") OBSERVED BY THE AUTOCRATIC
REGIME OF HAILE SELASSIE, HAS (DELETE "PLUMMETED", ADD
"DECLINED IN SOME RESPECTS") SINCE THE ASSUMPTION OF
POWER BY THE ETHIOPIAN PROVISIONAL MILITARY GOVERNMENT
(EPMG) IN SEPTEMBER 1974, (ADD "EVEN THOUGH ECONOMIC
RIGHTS AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION BY THE MAJORITY HAVE
BEEN ENHANCED".) COMMENT - EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT IF
THIS PARA IS TO SERVE AS SUMMARY FOR ENTIRE PLAN, BOTH
ASPECTS OF CHANGING HUMAN RIGHTS SCENE SHOULD BE NOTED.

1. RESPECT FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON CONFIDENTIAL

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(DELETE "ETHIOPIA IS REplete WITH", ADD "THERE ARE
NUMEROUS INSTANCES OF ETHIOPIAN") VIOLATIONS OF RESPECT
FOR THE INTEGRITY OF THE PERSON, ESPECIALLY FOR THOSE
PERSONS LINKED WITH THE OLD ARISTOCRACY, THE HAILE
SELASSIE REGIME, OR SUSPECTED OF ENGAGING IN ANTI-REGIME
ACTIVITIES. FOR EXAMPLE, WIVES AND CHILDREN OF (DELETE
"64", ADD "MANY OF THE 60") HIGH-RANKING OFFICIALS
SUMMARILY EXECUTED IN (DELETE 1975, ADD 1974) BY THE
REGIME REMAIN IN PRISON. WHILE TORTURE HAS NOT BEEN
FREQUENTLY MENTIONED AS A SERIOUS PROBLEM, THE
COMMON USE OF ARBITRARY ARREST AND THE LENGTHY
IMPRISONMENT OF OPPONENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT APPEARS TO
BE (DELETE "GROWING", ADD "MAINTAINING A STEADY PACE".)
IN AN EFFORT TO CHECK GROWING (INSERT "ACTIVE")
OPPOSITION, AND PARTICULARLY TO DISARM URBAN TERRORIST
GROUPS, THE EPMG ORGANIZED (DELETE "EARLY IN 1977", ADD
"LATE IN 1976") A WIDE-RANGING SEARCH AND SEIZURE PROGRAM.
NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS (KEBELES) WERE ARMED AND
AUTHORIZED TO CARRY OUT SEARCHES OF HOMES, VEHICLES, AND
PERSONS IN AN EFFORT TO LOCATE WEAPONS AND ANTI-GOVERNMENT
LITERATURE. (DELETE SENTENCE BEGINNING, "THIS ARBITRARY..."

AND SUBSTITUTE THE FOLLOWING: "THIS ARBITRARY CAMPAIGN, THOUGH FOR THE MOST PART CONDUCTED IN AN ORDERLY MANNER, BECAME HAPHAZARD AND UNSUPERVISED AT ONE POINT IN MARCH, 1977, RESULTING IN NUMEROUS DEATHS AND ARRESTS".)

COMMENT - MARCH EVENTS, THOUGH BLOODY ENOUGH, ALMOST CERTAINLY DID NOT INVOLVE "UNTOLD NUMBERS". (DELETE SENTENCE BEGINNING "ESPECIALLY FLAGRANT..." AND SUBSTITUTE FOLLOWING: "ONE ESPECIALLY FLAGRANT VIOLATION, UNRELATED TO SEARCH CAMPAIGN, WAS A STREET CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ANTI-GOVERNMENT, STUDENT-AGED DEMONSTRATORS AND GOVERNMENT SECURITY FORCES, WHICH RESULTED IN REPORTED DEATHS OF SEVERAL HUNDRED DEMONSTRATORS.")

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UNDER (DELETE "THE ROBESPIERRE-LIKE") LT. COL. MENGISTU (WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE KILLING OF HIS TWO PREDECESSORS), THE EPMG RULES BY DECREE ON THE BASIS OF A ROUGH CONSENSUS PROVIDED BY MILITARY PERSONNEL ELECTED BY MILITARY UNITS. THE PARLIAMENT AND

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 4011

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CONSTITUTION HAVE BEEN DISSOLVED AND NO (DELETE "ELECTIONS ARE EVEN CONTEMPLATED", ADD "NATIONAL ELECTIONS ARE CONTEMPLATED FOR NEAR FUTURE, ALTHOUGH ELECTIONS HAVE BEEN HELD IN URBAN AREAS FOR KEBELE LEADERSHIP COUNCILS.")

THE ABSENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES OR ELECTIONS FOR NATIONAL OFFICE, OF COURSE, SERIOUSLY CIRCUMSCRIBES THE POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY. ULTIMATE POWER IS VESTED IN THE PROVISIONAL MILITARY ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL (PMAC) OR DIRG, WHICH MAKES ALL MAJOR DECISIONS. AT THE PERSISTENT URGING OF THE SOVIETS AND THEIR ALLIES, ETHIOPIA IS EXPECTED (DELETE "SHORTLY TO FORM A COMMUNIST PART, PROBABLY", ADD "TO FORM A NATIONAL MARXIST-LENINIST WORKERS' PARTY WITHIN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS, POSSIBLY") ALONG THE LINES OF THE SOVIET MODEL.

2. RESPECT FOR CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES

FOR THE MASS OF THE POPULACE (DELETE "CERTAIN CIVIL AND POLITICAL LIBERTIES PROBABLY", ADD "OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RUDIMENTARY POLITICAL LIFE OF THE COUNTRY") HAVE BEEN EXPANDED UNDER ETHIOPIA'S REVOLUTION. (DELETE "MAINLY RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS TO PARTICIPATE IN RUDIMENTARY POLITICAL LIFE".) THE FORMATION OF URBAN

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AND RURAL DWELLERS' ASSOCIATIONS HAVE PROVIDED A VEHICLE (DELETE "AS YET UNTESTED") FOR THE ETHIOPIAN MASSES TO HAVE A LIMITED INPUT INTO SOME OF THE POLITICAL DECISIONS HAVING A BEARING ON THEIR LIVES. THE MASS OF THE POPULACE HAD SCANT INFLUENCE ON ELECTIONS UNDER HAILE SELASSIE. AS STATED ABOVE, THE RIGHTS OF THE OPPOSITION ARE NONEXISTENT. FOREIGN TRAVEL (ADD "IS CONTROLLED") AND EMIGRATION (DELETE "HAVE", ADD "HAS") ALL BUT BEEN HALTED. (DELETE "EXCEPT FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF TRUSTED OFFICIALS"). (DELETE SENTENCE BEGINNING, "A POLICY OF ...", ADD THE FOLLOWING: "SOCIAL CONTACTS BETWEEN ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALS AND MANY FOREIGN DIPLOMATS (MOSTLY WESTERN) ARE PROBABLY UNOFFICIALLY DISCOURAGED, AND MANY PRIVATE CITIZENS NO LONGER CONSIDER SUCH CONTACTS WISE IN THE PRESENT POLITICAL CLIMATE"). COMMENT - SOCIAL PATTERNS IN COMMUNIST STATES VARY WIDELY, AND COMPARISONS ARE NOT MEANINGFUL. END COMMENT. MOVEMENT WITHIN THE COUNTRY, (ADD "OTHER THAN AS A RESULT OF PROBLEMS CREATED BY THE SECURITY SITUATION"), AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION SEEM SO FAR TO HAVE REMAINED UNAFFECTED BY (DELETE "THE REFORMING ZEAL OF") THE REVOLUTION. (DELETE "LIKE PRIVATE FOREIGN TRAVEL"), EMIGRATION HAS BEEN VIRTUALLY HALTED, ALTHOUGH A NUMBER OF EXCEPTIONS ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS HAVE BEEN REPORTED.

3. GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE TOWARDS ECONOMIC HUMAN RIGHTS

ALTHOUGH THE REVOLUTIONARY TURMOIL HAS BLOCKED IN
PART ITS REALIZATION, GOVERNMENT POLICY SEEMS GENUINELY
AIMED AT RAISING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LEVEL OF THE
MASSES. CENTURIES OF FEUDALISM SEEM TO HAVE BEEN
DEALT A FATAL BLOW. THE MOST SUCCESSFUL POLICY
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DEFINITELY HAS BEEN THE LAND REFORM WHICH HAS ENDED
THE WIDESCALE OWNERSHIP OF LAND BY AN OPPRESSIVE
ARISTOCRATIC CASTE--MOST STRIKING IN THE AREAS INHABITED
BY NON-AMHARIC PEOPLE, NOTABLY IN THE GALLA-PEOPLED
SOUTHWEST. MORE FOOD NOW (DELETE "SEEMS TO BE", ADD
"IS") CONSUMED OR RETAINED BY THE RURAL POPULACE THAN
WAS THE CASE UNDER THE EMPEROR. (ADD "THE MAJORITY OF")
THE PEASANT CLASS, WHICH MAKES UP THE BULK OF THE
POPULATIONS, IS REPORTEDLY GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH THE
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL GAINS THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED UNDER
THE REFORMS.

HEALTH CARE AT BEST IS RUDIMENTARY IN ETHIOPIA,
(ADD "BUT ITS IMPROVEMENT IS BEING GIVEN TOP PRIORITY
BY THE GOVERNMENT".) THE SCHEDULED ARRIVAL OF OVER 100
CUBAN MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS SHOULD ADD DRAMATICALLY TO
THE HEALTH DELIVERY CAPACITY OF A COUNTRY HAVING ONLY
SLIGHTLY OVER 300 DOCTORS. THE EPMG IS COOPERATING WITH
WHT WHO IN ELIMINATING THE LAST VESTIGES OF SMALL POX
FROM ETHIOPIA; SOMALIA IS THE ONLY OTHER COUNTRY IN THE
WORLD STILL TO HAVE REPORTED CASES. CORRUPTION (DELETE
"HAS NOT BEEN REPORTED") IN THE ETHIOPIAN GOVERNMENT
(ADD "IS NOT SIGNIFICANT"). THE REVOLUTION IS STILL IN
AN EARLY IDEALISTIC AND SOMEWHAT PURITANICAL PHASE.
(DELETE "EXAMPLES OF") PROFITEERING (DELETE "BY") GRAIN
MERCHANTS LAST YEAR WERE DEALT WITH BY SUMMARY EXECUTION.
COMMENT - BETTER ENGLISH.

4. GOVERNMENT RESPONSIBILITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD

IN THE GOVERNMENT'S VIEW THE LEVEL OF MEANINGFUL
HUMAN RIGHTS FOR THE ETHIOPIAN MASSES HAS IMPROVED
MEASURABLY SINCE THE REVOLUTION. THE EPMG POINTS TO THE
GAINS IN ECONOMIC WELL-BEING AND THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE BASIC DECISION-MAKING PROCESS, AREAS IN WHICH THE
GOVERNMENT MUST BE CREDITED FOR ACHIEVING POSITIVE
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ADVANCES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE GOVERNMENT MUST BE

HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEATH OF (DELETE "THOUSANDS OF
NONCOMBATANTS"), (ADD "MANY INDIVIDUALS") DURING THE EFFORT
TO CRUSH VARIOUS OPPOSITION FORCE. IT MUST ALSO BE NOTED
THAT THE OPPOSITION, NOTABLY THE URBAN/MARXIST ETHIOPIAN
PEOPLE'S REVOLUTIONARY PARTY (EPRP), IS GUILTY OF
MOUNTING A VAST TERRORIST EFFORT TO TOPPLE THE EPMG.
(DELETE "UNFORTUNATELY, AN EXAGGERATED DEGREE OF
INTRANSIGENCE," BEGIN INSTEAD: "AN UNCOMPROMISING
ATTITUDE") HAS CHARACTERIZED THE EPMG. THERE HAS BEEN NO
WILLINGNESS (DELETE "TO SEEK A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT
WITH," ADD "ON ITS PART NOR ON THE PART OF") ANY OF THE
VARIOUS DISSIDENT AND INSURGENT GROUPS WHICH DOT THE
COUNTRY (ADD "TO SEEK A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.")
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 ADDIS ABABA 4011

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EVEN MAKING ALLOWANCES FOR THE FACT THAT THE INITIAL
PHASES OF A MAJOR REVOLUTION MAY TEND TO BE BLOODY, THE
TECHNIQUES OF THE DIRG EXHIBIT (DELETE "AN UNUSUAL
EXCESS OF", ADD "A HEAVY RELIANCE ON") VIOLENCE.

5.
TSIDE INVESTIGATIONS - NO CHANGES RECOMMENDED.

B. ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. US OBJECTIVES

OUR HUMAN RIGHTS OBJECTIVE DURING THE NEXT TWELVE
MONTHS IS TO GET THE EPMG TO TAKE NOTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS
PROBLEMS IN ETHIOPIA AND THEREBY ENCOURAGE IT TO MODULATE
HARSH REVOLUTIONARY POLICIES AND ACTIONS. OUR (DELETE

"FOUR") MAJOR OBJECTIVES ARE:--AN END TO THE SECESSIONIST WAR WITH ERITREA WHICH HAS (DELETE "PRODUCED WIDESCALE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND") CONTRIBUTED TO THE ATMOSPHERE OF CRISIS/VIOLENCE THROUGHOUT ETHIOPIA. COMMENT - MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN ERITREA OCCURRED DURING EARLIER STAGES OF THE WAR; THEY HAVE NOT CHARACTERIZED THE FIGHTING OF THE LAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS.

--(ADD "AN END TO RURAL AND URBAN TERRORISM AS PRACTICED BY OPPOSITION ELEMENTS.")

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--RELEASE FROM PRISON OF AT LEAST THOSE (DELETE "WHOSE ONLY CRIME IS A FAMILY RELATIONSHIP WITH OPPONENTS OF THE REGIME", ADD "WHO HAVE NOT BEEN CHARGED WITH ANY CRIME.") COMMENT - A MORE COMPREHENSIVE GROUP WHOSE HUMAN RIGHTS ARE CLEARLY BEING VIOLATED.

--(ADD "CONTINUED") PROGRESS TOWARD THE EPMG'S ANNOUNCED GOAL OF A FUNDAMENTAL DEMOCRATIZATION AND RE-SHAPING OF ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY TO (DELETE "DISTRIBUTE", ADDHNZIMPROVE") ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL BENEFITS. (DELETE "MORE WIDEHP")

COMMENT - OTHER VERSION SOUNBE TOOO-4/8 5.

--(DELETE "A RETURN TO CIVILNEN COKRTFSAND TO", ADD "ESTABLISHMENT OF") JUDICIAL PRODEDURES (DELETE "WHICH", ADD "TO") PROVIDE GENUINE PROTECTION TO ACCUSED PERSONS. COMMENT - KEBELES NOW HAVE CIVILIAN COURTS.

--THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CONDITIONS AND AHLEGIME WHICH WILL PERMIT A GENERAL ADHERANCE TO BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS.

(EMBASSY RECOMMENDS NO CHANGEI N NEXT PARA, BEGINNING,'
"OUR SPECIAL
RELATIONSHIP..", NOR IN PARAS A, B, OR C
UNDER POSSIBLE ACTIONS.)

D. WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO SPEAK OUT FORCEFULLY ON MAJOR INCIDENTS OF HUMAN GSGHTS VIOLATIONS AS THEY MIGHT OCCUR IN ETHIOPIA. FOR SUCH STATEMENTS TO HAVE ANY POSITIVE EFFECT ON ETHIOPIAN HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES, THEY MUST BE BALANCED AND CONTAIN SOME RECOGNITION OF THE FACT THAT ETHIOPIA HAS MADE PROGRESS IN HUMAN RIGHTS IN SOME AREAS AND ALSO THAT THE EPMG IS COPING WITH (DELETE "LARGE AMOUNTS OF", ADD "NUMEROUS POLITICAL OPPONENTS WHO FREQUENTLY RESORT TO TERRORISTIC TACTICS"). COMMENT - SEE ALSO VIEWS EXPRESSED PARA 2 ABOVE).

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THROUGHOUT WE SHOULD INCREASE OUR QUIET DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, IDEALLY FORWARNING THE EPMG WHEN WE ARE PLANNING TO MAKE A NEW STATEMENT ON THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN ETHIOPIA. IF FUTURE STATEMENTS CAN BE MORE BALANCED AS SUGGESTED ABOVE, THE CHANCES OF OUR EFFORTS BEING RECEIVED WITH ANYTHING OTHER THAN TOTAL OUTRAGE MAY BE HEIGHTENED.

2. EXPECTED REACTIONS

THE EPS HAS REACTED WITH ANNOYANCE AND HURT ON TWO OCCASIONS WHEN WE PUBLICLY ATTACKED THEIR RECORD ON HUMAN RIGHTS. SECRETARY VANCE'S ANNOUNCEMENT ON FEBRUARY 24 THAT WE WOULD GIVE NO FUTURE GRANT MILITARY MATERIAL ASSISTANCE TO ETHIOPIA; AND AT OUR ABSTENTION ON TWO IDA LOANS FOR ETHIOPIA ON MAY 10. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY ANGEREDHQHAT WE GAVE NO CREDIT TO THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANCES UNDER THE REVOLUTION OR THE FACT THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS UNDER CONSTANT ATTACK FROM TERRORISTS. THERE HAS BEEN NO IDENTIFIABLE PRAISE FOR OUR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY FROM ANY SEGMENT OF ETHIOPIAN OFFICIALDOM. MANY (DELETE "ETHIOPIAN PRIVATE CITIZENS, INCLUDING MOST") REFUGEES (DELETE ,"HOQVER,") WERE DELIGHTED OVER OUR DECISION TO CUT MAP TO ETHIOPIA. THE HUMAN RIGHTS GROUNDS WERE PROBABLY NOT A FACTOR IN THEIR SATISFACTION, HOWEVER. COMMENT - EMBASSY HAS HEARD NO EXPRESSIONS OF PLEASURE OVER MAP CUTOFF FROM PRIVATE CITIZENS HERE. TIENKEN

NOTE BY OC/T: PARA 5 AS RECEIVED.

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